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FEBRUARY 2026

# The Woodland Heights Herald

*Helping Make Our Community as Friendly as it is Beautiful*



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## Home Is Where the Care Is

### **An Overview of Our Local Healthcare Resources for Eldercare and Support**

Recognizing the quality of the healthcare resources and support in our community is more important than ever, particularly as time marches on. Many of us will or have found ourselves in the midst of navigating the resources available for eldercare, whether for ourselves, or someone we love. This is a daunting task at the best of times, let alone when trying to keep up with ongoing changes in the health care system. Keeping in mind that Seniors' needs vary depending on their circumstances, we thought it would be helpful to provide an overview of the resources available in our community

A special thank you to Irene Wright for her assistance compiling this information. Irene and her husband, John, are featured in the **Getting to Know You** column that follows.

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# Muskoka Healthcare Resources for Elder Care and Support

Look for this summary on our Woodland Heights website [here](#) for your convenience.

## 1) Ontario Government Direct Lines:

Do you know the difference between Health811 and Ontario211?

In Ontario, **811 (Health811)** is for non-urgent health information and medical advice from a registered nurse, while **211** is for connecting people with community, social, and government services like housing, food banks, and financial assistance. [🔗](#)

Feature <a href="#">🔗</a>	811 (Health811)	211
<b>Purpose</b>	Non-urgent health information and medical advice from healthcare professionals (e.g., registered nurses, dietitians, pharmacists).	Information and referrals to community, social, and government services.
<b>Services</b>	Symptom assessment, finding a doctor or nurse practitioner accepting new patients, information on chronic conditions, and general health inquiries.	Food banks, housing and shelter, utility assistance, childcare, employment resources, and mental health support referrals.
<b>Availability</b>	24/7 by phone, TTY, or online chat.  <i>More info at <a href="http://health811.ontario.ca">health811.ontario.ca</a></i>	24/7 by phone, TTY, text, or online database.  <i>More info at <a href="http://211ontario.ca">211ontario.ca</a></i>

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## 2) Where to Get Care Muskokas / Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare

- When to go to the Emergency Department
  - When to see your Primary Care Provider
  - If you don't have a primary care provider
  - If you have a family doctor or nurse practitioner
  - Pharmacy Options
  - Virtual Care Options
  - Mental Health & Addictions Support
  - Prescription Renewal
- Other Resources:
- Kids Help Phone
  - Simcoe Muskoka Health Connection
  - 11/North Simcoe Muskoka Healthline
  - Ontario Poison Control
  - Muskoka Victim Services
  - Women & Children's Health Network

*More info at [mahc.com](http://mahc.com), #WheretoGetCareMuskoka*

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## 3) Ontario Health at Home

- Getting Started
- Home Care & Palliative Care
- Community Care
- Long-term Care
- Supportive Living

*More info at [ontariohealthathome.ca](http://ontariohealthathome.ca)*

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## Muskoka Healthcare Resources for Elder Care and Support

### 4) Muskoka Seniors

- Social Connections
- Meals on Wheels
- Transportation
- Friendly visiting
- Digital Accessibility Tools

*More info at [muskokaseniors.org](http://muskokaseniors.org)*

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### 5) Alzheimers Muskoka

- About Dementia
- Alzheimer's Disease
- Other types of Dementia
- Do I have Dementia?
- Prevention
- Treatment
- Stigma against Dementia
- Help & Support
- Take Action
- Research
- What's Happening

Location: 1-239 Manitoba Street, Bracebridge, Ontario P1L 1S2

Phone: 705-645-5621

[admin@alzheimermuskoka.ca](mailto:admin@alzheimermuskoka.ca)

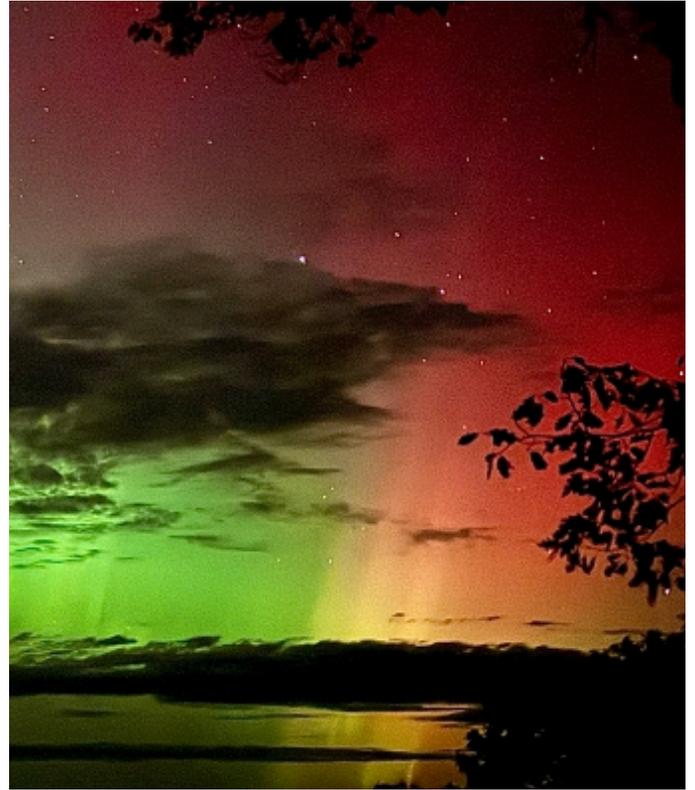
*More info at [alzheimer.ca/muskoka/en](http://alzheimer.ca/muskoka/en)*

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### 6) Town of Huntsville 55+, Huntsville Seniors 55

- Card Games (Bridge, Euchre, Bid Euchre, Cribbage)
- Shuffleboard
- Tea, coffee and a chat available any time
- Arts and Crafts
- Table Tennis
- Travel Talk
- Photography Club
- Billiards

*More info at [huntsville.ca/recreation-culture/sports-recreation-and-creative-programs](http://huntsville.ca/recreation-culture/sports-recreation-and-creative-programs)*



## Getting to Know You

### DISCOVERING OUR NEIGHBOURS

John & Irene Wright: Advocacy in Action

When John and Irene Wright built their home on Old Hemlock Trail in 2005, Woodland Heights was still in its early days, with fewer than 50 homes scattered among the trees. Drawn to Huntsville by Irene's fond memories of summers at Camp Tawingo, the couple embraced the area's natural beauty and quickly became part of the fabric of the community. John has a background in landscape architecture and design. He and Irene developed a design for their home to maximize views and seamlessly blend their property with the surrounding forest. Irene, equally at home outdoors, shares a love of cycling and hiking. Together, they spend countless hours exploring trails both here and abroad, as they often spend their winters in warmer climates.

Photography is another of John's passions. From their backyard, which offers a sweeping panoramic view of the region, he has captured countless images that reflect the changing seasons and the community around Woodland Heights.

Beyond their personal pursuits, John and Irene have given generously of their time and energy to the community. John served for several years on the Woodland Heights board, helping to navigate issues related to the interests of the community.

Their dedication extends beyond Woodland Heights. When John's father lived with them and later moved into the Fairvern Long-Term Care Home, the Wrights became strong supporters. During the pandemic, they organized staff appreciation events and helped families stay connected. John's expertise was integral to getting approval for the new building, and they continue to support the upcoming transition to Fairvern's new location. In the summers, John can often be found riding the mower, while Irene lends her care to the gardens, both ensuring the grounds remain beautiful and enjoyable for residents, visitors and staff.

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## Getting to Know You ... continued

Irene has also been a long-time member of the Fairvern Family Council, liaising with their administration to collaboratively address resident and family questions or concerns. With her management background in healthcare, Irene was asked to co-lead the Patient Family Caregiver Partners Advisory Committee (PFCPAC) for the Muskoka and Area Ontario Health Team in 2019. The role of PFCPAC has been to enable the voice of patients and their caregivers in the evolution of the Muskoka region's health care system.

Woodland Heights is fortunate to count John and Irene among its residents. In addition to their embrace of the outdoors, their generosity, advocacy and commitment enrich our community, reminding us all of the value of connection and care.



## Sign up for Trivia Night on February 21st

What better time than the depths of winter to hold our own Trivia Night! You may know there are weekly Trivia Nights in town at Canvas and the Lake of Bays Brewhouse. With thanks to the Jeffords and the Valoos on Natures Way, we're going to host our very own Trivia Night, right here in Woodland Heights!

**When:** Saturday, February 21<sup>st</sup>

**Where:** 56 Natures Way (the venue can be mobility accessible with advance notice, as needed).

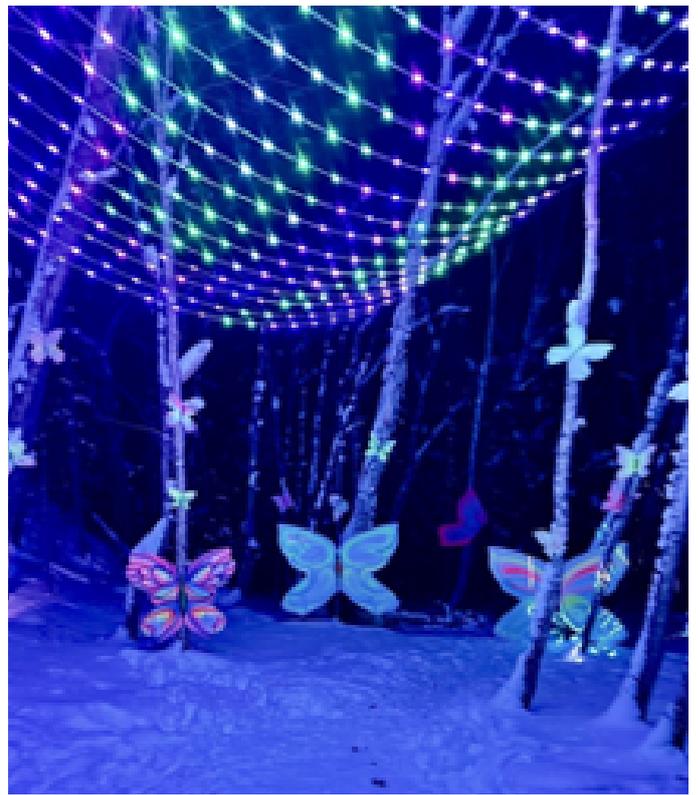
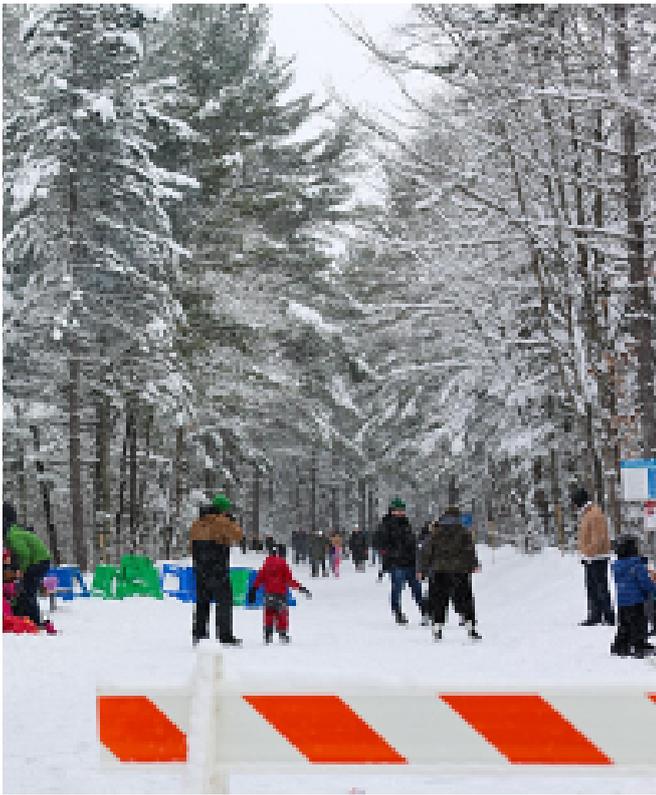
**When:** 6:30 P.M.

**Who:** All residents welcome, teams will be randomly selected (Adults only, age 19+)\*\*

**What:** A variety of categories and point value, all in the name of fun!

Trivia Nights are more than just fun and games and their benefits go beyond entertainment value. Come out and enjoy some cognitive enhancement, new social connections and an endorphin boost from stress relief and some fun and healthy competition! Basic refreshments will be provided. Please BYOB, and bringing an appetizer is welcome, but not required.

**\*\* ADVANCE REGISTRATION is required  
and limited to the first 28 participants by emailing [WHCASocial@gmail.com](mailto:WHCASocial@gmail.com)**



## Explore Your Backyard

Muskoka is filled with beauty, nature and vibrant activity. We are so lucky to call this four-season playground home! In fact, have you ever found yourself surprised at all the incredible venues, events and activities in and around our community? As a thriving year-round destination, it can sometimes be overwhelming to keep on top of just what is available, and when. We're pleased to introduce this new column, **Explore Your Backyard**. In each issue of The Herald, we'll suggest some of the local sights you may want to explore in the coming quarter. Winter is an especially busy time in Muskoka, so let's jump in! Here are a few ideas to explore:

### Ice skating, skiing and snowshoeing

Arrowhead Provincial Park is one of the most iconic winter destinations in Ontario and it's only 5 minutes away. It offers a beautiful 1.3 km skating loop, 30 km of skiing and over 8 km of snowshoe trails. A Day Pass is a must with or without a Seasonal Park Permit and it can be booked up to 5 days in advance online or at the time in the Visitor Centre. Parking is located at the skate trail or visitor centre with accessible spots. Equipment rental is available at the pavilion beside the Visitor Centre. "Fire and Ice" torch-lit evening skating is on Friday and Saturdays. It's a magical experience to skate at sunset by the glow of tiki torches. <https://www.ontarioparks.ca/park/arrowhead>

Sandhill Nursery is a local attraction known for its "Forest of Lights." This involves a leisurely stroll in the wooded area near the far parking lot. There is lots of parking in designated areas with access parking available. The walking trail is groomed and not too long. It ends at the Rusty Rake snack bar with available seating by the fire and delicious treats for purchase.

Skating is available under shelter and lights near the centre. There is snowshoeing across the grounds and cross country skiing along the daytime paths. Rental equipment is available. Seasonal or daily passes are purchased online. There is something for everyone and it's only a 25 minute drive. 705-789-5319  
<https://sandhillnursery.ca/forest-of-light>

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## Explore Your Backyard ... continued

Muskoka Lakes Farm and Winery of Bala is a bit further away but offers such an adventure! There is an 1.2 km ice skating trail and snowshoeing around the cranberry marsh fields. Afterwards there is fun with s'mores over the fire, mulled cider and even wine and fondue tasting. Cranberry treats and alcoholic beverages can be purchased in the store. Tickets can be purchased in advance online or at the grounds. There is plenty of parking with accessible parking available near the store. 705-762-3203. <https://cranberry.ca/>

During Maple Syrup season, tours are offered in the cranberry bog to the sugar bush. The sweet taste of syrup combines with the tartness of their cranberries to make such a yummy treat. Dates are not yet determined but will be updated on their website.

Limberlost Forest is a hidden gem and only 25 minutes away. It offers snowshoeing, skiing and hiking. No tickets required and ample parking available. Ski the Buck Lake loop or just enjoy the sights. <https://limberlostforest.com/>

## Ice Climbing

Need a bit more adventure.....Muskoka is known for its small but beautiful areas for ice climbing!

LIV Outside in Bracebridge offers ice climbing, fat bikes, snowshoeing and skiing. Equipment rentals are available with 48 hr reservation. The ice climbing is offered with expert guides and usually scheduled 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The tours must be made in advance due to the necessity for a guide. Courses are offered but require online or phone booking. Call 705-646-0492 for LIV Outside.

Muskoka Mountainworks offers full day guided tours. Advance booking is required as they work in different areas. 416-618-1070. <http://www.muskokamountainworks.com/>

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## Explore Your Backyard ... continued

### Sleigh Rides

Animal lovers needing a bit of adventure can find private sleigh rides at “Back of Beyond Equine Centre” in Huntsville. Day time and night rides are provided with a camp fire. Tours of the farm and its many horses are also available upon request. Bookings are online or by phone with e-transfers. Bookings start with a minimum of two persons but can be as many as twelve per ride. 705-380-5226. <https://backofbeyondequinecentre.com/>

Don't miss out on their private Maple Sugar rides starting in March 14th to April 20th. A small bottle of syrup is provided to enjoy in your hot chocolate or take home.

These are just a few of the many adventures awaiting in our own backyard. Let's kickstart April with the wonders of Maple Syrup. Huntsville is known for its delightful festival full of sticky goodness and activities for everyone. The dates have not yet been released but the anticipation is building with excitement...hope to see you there!



Not sure where to start? Snow conditions are excellent in the Sanctuary .... literally, in your “backyard!”